New York Tribune

First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements.

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Mr. Lansing and the President's "Triumph."

"The Globe" says that The Tribune is the "victim of misunderstandings" in holding that Secretary Lansing, in his letter of January 18 last to the Allied Powers, indorsed the latest German view of the character of armed merchantmen. The misunderstanding of Mr. Lansing's position is all on "The Globe's" side.

It maintains that Mr. Lansing's suggestion to Great Britain and France that they disarm their merchantmen, so as to dispose of the contention that submarines are obliged in self-protection to attack without notice or warning, did not commit him to the theory that the rules of international law can be changed during a war except by general agreement among belligerents and neutrals. True enough. When Mr. Lansing presented this proposition to the Allied Powers he was merely acting as an intermediary seeking to bring about a new *modus vivendi* supposed to be of benefit to all concerned. The Tribune did not base its criticism of him on that part of his letter of January 18.

The Secretary of State said in the body of his communication: "It would therefore appear to be a reasonable and reciprocally just arrangement if it could be agreed by the opposing belligerents that submarines should be caused to adhere strictly to the rules of international law in the matter of stopping and searching merchant vessels, determining their belligerent nationality and removing the crews and passengers to places of safety before sinking the vessels as prizes of war, and that merchant vessels of belligerent nationality should be prohibited from carrying any armament whatsoever."

In presenting this argument Mr. Lansing did not commit our government to the change in international law which he proposed, except on the basis of an acceptance of the change by other neutral governments and by all the belligerents. We agree so far with "The Globe" that "the fact that he addressed Great Britain and France and asked them to consent to a change in the existing rule implied that he recognized what was the existing rule and that it could not be changed without general consent."

But what about the postscript to Mr. Lansing's letter? In that he was not talking about an alteration in international law to be made by all the nations concerned, but of an alteration to be made by the United States, acting singly and on its own responsibility.

Here is what he wrote: "I should add that my government is impressed with the reasonableness of the argument that a merchant vessel carrying an armament of any sort, in view of the character of submarine warfare and the defensive weakness of undersea craft, should be held to be an auxiliary cruiser and so treated by a neutral as well as by a belligerent government, and is seriously considering instructing its officials accordingly."

This was a prediction of a change of policy on the part of the United States wholly in line with the arguments made by the German Government. Berlin was trying to show that the rules of international law ought to be modified to meet new conditions in sea warfare. The German Government wanted to be able to justify the sinking of merchant ships armed for defence on the ground that though being ostensibly armed for defence they were also armed, so far as submarines were concerned, for a highly damaging offence, and were therefore subject to being treated not as merchantmen, but as auxiliary cruisers.

Mr. Lansing said that the United States Government was "seriously considering" accepting the German contention and applying it for Germany's benefit. If he and President Wilson had given orders to the collectors at American ports to treat armed merchantmen as auxiliary warships, the American contention that neutrals have a right to travel on armed merchantmen would have been wholly abandoned.

In his letter of February 24 to Senator Stone the President denied that he had any such intention of altering international law as Secretary Lansing had attributed to our government. He complained that his efforts to maintain neutral rights were being hampered by talk in Congress about warning Americans not to travel on armed merchantmen.

But Congress had no power, by passing concurrent resolutions of warning, to change the status of armed merchantmen or even to prevent Americans from exercising the right to take passage on them. The only real waiver of that right ever proposed in Washington was the waiver which Mr. Lansing said the State Department was "seriously considering."

Congress took no step to alter international law and lacked, moreover, the power to alter it by passing the Gore and McLemore resolutions. The Administration had the power to give effect to Germany's demand for a change and did express itself strongly in favor of making, through its own individual action, the concession insisted upon by Germany.

Mr. Wilson's "triumph" over Congress on the armed merchantmen issue therefore sinks into insignificance compared with his triumph over Secretary Lansing's diplomacy, of which he was himself the inspiration. He was enabled to write what he did to Senator Stone only by repudiating what Mr. Lansing, on his behalf, had written in the postscript of the communication of February 18 to the Allied governments.

Afraid of a Real Budget.

It is evident that the Legislature is not to take any steps toward creating a budget system for this state. Improvements in the methods of handling the appropriation bills there probably will be. Senator Sage's plan for a Legislature-made appropriation bill, to which the Governor may contribute suggestions, to be completed and submitted to the Legislature in ample time for full discussion before adjournment, would certainly represent progress over conditions existing heretofore. Senator Brown's proposed constitutional amendment, miscalled a "budget plan," would also be an improvement.

There is nothing in either of these schemes, though, which would necessarily check the inevitable "pork" items. Senator Sage's bill would assure greater publicity for appropriations; Senator Brown's scheme would necessitate a two-thirds vote for the "pork" bills. Some greater force than either of these palliatives is necessary to protect the State Treasury.

The only logical, complete budget scheme laid before the Legislature this year—the only one which contained the essential features to protect the state's dollars so far as they can be protected by the operation of a system—came from the Bureau of Municipal Research. That provided for the submission to the Legislature of a Governor-made budget, accompanied by an estimate of the state's income for the fiscal year. The Legislature would be required to discuss this and make changes, each house sitting in committee of the whole. Thus wide publicity would be assured to the proposed appropriations. No increase in items might be made; any increases would have to be made in separate bills, of course subject to veto. Thus the Governor would have control of the size of the year's appropriations, a power commensurate with the responsibility which the public puts upon him.

Of course it would be expecting too much to hope that a Legislature made up of ordinary power-loving, advantage-seeking politicians would have patriotism enough to relinquish their present powers in favor of such a scheme, or confidence enough in any Executive to give him the power to fix a minimum for appropriations. That would be smashing the "pork barrel" in earnest.

Yet such a scheme presents the sole hope of the state's ever achieving anything resembling genuine economy in the handling of funds. The Sage idea, the Brown idea, the Whitman idea—the last one thrown into the discard by the indignant Legislature—are timid little improvements on a rotten system which fosters extravagance and waste. That system isn't to be changed because it is a part of politics and the legislators are politicians who need the state's money to help out their political schemes.

Bookselling.

Mr. Temple Scott has been discussing in "The Publishers' Weekly" the uncertain and devious roads by which the publisher reaches his public—not the buyer of best-sellers, but the buyer of the books which he ought to read and does not know about. To be sure, in a way, the books we ought to read usually reach us sooner or later, but there's the rub. Kant said that after a hundred years he would be more widely read than in his own lifetime; so said Stendhal, and both were right.

But in this predicted posthumous popularity there was no consolation whatever for their publishers—quite the reverse. The works of George Bernard Shaw were a total loss to the house which first introduced them in this country; another firm took them over at, literally, the psychological moment. Nine booksellers out of ten refused to invest in Professor Bergson when he was first translated, yet he found his public overnight. Perhaps he will not be so widely read a hundred years hence, but that is a matter which his publishers can contemplate with equanimity.

That the publishing business is an innumerable number of enterprises in one; that a book on psychology, a volume of poems and a novel by Mrs. Barclay have nothing in common except their outward appearance; that the bookseller cannot possibly acquaint himself intimately with the wares he sells—all these considerations are commonplaces. "I want a copy of Professor Mahaffy's essay on conversation," said a customer in a bookstore, not so long ago. "We don't have him," was the sweet answer, "but we have Ollendorff." Add to this the ignorance of the majority of book buyers of what they want, let alone what they should read—and the difficulties besetting the path of the publisher become plain. "Now I must get something for Ella," said one sweet thing on Christmas shopping bent. "Give her a book," suggested her companion. "No; she has a book." That settled it.

Mr. Scott wants to educate the bookseller, the public—and the publisher. No light task. Some time ago bookselling was proposed as a liberal profession for women, to be studied seriously. It takes a lifetime to produce a really competent book clerk, and, except in a few cases, the rewards are so small that the industry and talent applied would find far better compensation elsewhere. Mr. Scott does not propose the application of the department store system to bookselling—each clerk to have charge of only one branch, be it biography, children's books or sports, and knowing that thoroughly. Yet this seems to be the only solution so far as the retailer is concerned.

What then? Revolutionize the science and the art of book advertising, says Mr. Scott. He has in his mind's eye a genius who will lay out an advertising campaign for each individual book according to the public to which its appeal is made. That Napoleon of book advertising will provide the salesman on the road with the proper information; he will give the retailer the necessary material for talking with some degree of knowledge about its contents; and he will awaken the public to the importance of the book about to be offered it.

It is a magnificent idea. Only, as "The Publishers' Weekly" drily observes, when the publisher has found this advertising genius he will not be able to keep him long. For the genius will take unto himself a partner, start publishing himself and grow rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

Still, Mr. Scott's two papers are sure to be widely read. They are another step in the right direction, toward that scientific organization of the publishing business, in all its commercial branches of which it so sadly stands in need.

Damns, Past and Present.

It will be a sad day for English speaking peoples when the fiction that "damn" is real cussin' is thoroughly exploded. The English language is peculiarly poor, as compared with the romance languages, in moderate imprecations. With the exception of "damn," what is there which a gentleman in a hurry may wrap his tongue about to check his fall, as it were? To cry, "The devil!" is to rest the burden of righteous wrath on too slender a reed. To shout "Hell!" is to touch bottom. "Damn" is really the only adequate and convenient compromise between silence and depths of articulation unprintable.

Of course, the dictionary in all candor betrays the inherent innocence of this explosive. It points out that in Latin, Old French and Middle English, whence it has descended to us, "damn" occupied an honored but commonplace niche in popular speech. The King James version of the Bible employs it freely. But, fortunately, the revised version, jealous, perhaps, of the word's enhancement of value in modern usage, substitutes "condemn" in each instance. That is the proper spirit. The fine edge of its expressiveness should not be blunted by needless employment.

By the same token we deprecate the published discovery of the Harvard numismatists that the original "damn," the ancestor of the Latin and Old French and Middle English forms, was merely the name of a Persian coin. It was used then, but without the "n," if the report may be credited, to designate the smallest, most insignificant of the media of exchange. Not to care a dam in those days meant what it does to-day, but for that uncarned increment of pep and punch, that flavor of raciness with which age and maturity—and an "n"—have clothed this precious syllable. It is this which gives it a vigor whose value can no longer be measured in Persian dams. What a pity if it should lose a tithe of this through a lack of respect for its powers of spiritual injury!

A shortage of straw hats is now predicted because the makers, lacking peroxide, won't be able to bleach the usual quantity of straw. If the shortage extends to include peroxide blondes, war's horrors will have some offset.

Will Villa prove a more artful dodger than Aguinaldo?

The Sword.

To Arms! Must ye be butchered in your beds
Before the trumpet stirs you? Must ye snore
Against the shrapnel, and cry out "Who's there!"
To dynamite? Ye mutter in your sleep
The watchwords of a spirit that is dead,
"America," ye cry, "does lead the world,"
"Star of the West, and Ark of Liberty,"
"And Duty—Duty"—still the talk moans on,
The drunkard reaches for his cup of cant—
As if this universe were made of words
And we a soul that Chaos rocks to sleep!

To Arms! The sword we draw was bathed in Heaven
While yet the stars were young. Its blade is bright,
And Courage is its name. A sword! A sword!
O Great Physician, heal our cowardice.
Give us the sword!

Behold the Loom of Life! The shuttle flies
In weaving all the nations ceaselessly,
And binding every thread. Your heart and mine
Are strands in Europe's fate. Yet inward fears
Whisper we have no portion in this war—
Bid us rejoice in our Fool's Paradise
Where Europe cannot come. O fond excuse
That will not stem the onset of the world!
Shame sets her flag in every honest cheek.
And cries, Beware!

My friends, my countrymen,
Europe is here. Our quickest road to health
Is to accept her. Whether she shall come
In arms against us, or in bond of peace,
With us against the enemies of mankind—
Whether we arm to aid a tortured race,
Or arm to save our children in the night—
The sword will flash. I bless the thought of it.
Thus shall we wake, grow manly, take our place
Unshamed among the nations of the earth.

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN.

The Man.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: You can regard me as one in favor of Colonel Roosevelt for our next President. What we need is *the* man, not *a* man.

ALBERT COMINS.

New York, March 9, 1916.

VERDUN

A Rhapsody by One Who Was There Lately.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I went all over Verdun last summer, but on the understanding that I should not write about what I saw—that is, in detail. But the battle now going on is so important from the point of view of public opinion, stock markets, etc., that I think I may fairly give the general impressions which I carried away with me:

First—If the city and so-called fortress of Verdun should fall, it means no more than the loss of a ten-acre lot. If the Germans have gained ground, it is because the French have only put up such a percentage of resistance as seemed worth while to them.

Second—The intrenchments and entanglements back of Verdun are just as important as those in front of it.

Third—Any position which the French decide to hold at all costs is a position which cannot be taken by the Germans. The Germans might just as well try to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Fourth—Americans, a small percentage of whom are really interested in this war, should remember that war itself could hardly exist if it wasn't for the French. It is an art and a passion of which they are past masters. (God bless them!) The terms of war, the names of things used in war, are French. If we except Galahad (who was really a Frenchman), our best heroes are French—Roland, Bayard, Joan of Arc—and these wonderful people were not exceptions; they were and are types.

Fifth—The French are so wonderful that to be alive in the same world with them is a privilege. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New York, March 6, 1916.

An Explanation Wanted.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Your editorial comment that New York City will echo the query of Benjamin C. Marsh to the City Club trustees, "What is the City Club going to do about Mr. Shonts?" seems to me most timely.

There is evidently something wrong with the condition of a civic organization such as the City Club when one of its members is squelched as soon as he asks for information regarding the action of the trustees and of a committee of the club on an important public question, such as the dual subway contracts. And it seems to me the club is not entitled to any consideration on the part of the public, and its pronouncements on public questions are open to suspicion when they make mistakes, as they have done with regard to the reasons assigned for expelling Mr. Marsh from membership.

I have seen no statement in the papers from the City Club giving any inkling of the conferences of trustees with financiers and others interested in "getting over" their contracts. Also, I would like to know why the club opposes a referendum on the land tax question in New York. Good policy, as well as a proper sense of self-respect, should, in my opinion, lead the club to take the public more into its confidence, now the Thompson legislative committee has lifted the lid on those transit contracts, and should convince it that expelling a member for asking for information can but cause an outsider to conclude the club does not believe in public discussion of public questions by its members. J. C. PUMPELLY.

New York, March 7, 1916.

Roosevelt or Defeat.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Myself and friends hope that The Tribune will give its readers the Progressive side of the political question. Theodore Roosevelt has too long been blamed for the split of 1912, for which certain Republican leaders were solely responsible. The same clique of powerful party bosses—Barnes at the head—is now again at work. They are putting Roosevelt's mantle upon Root's shoulders (it doesn't fit!), Roosevelt's words and sentiments in Root's mouth (witness his convention speech), and will try to foist Root or Hughes upon the Chicago convention, where Roosevelt alone is being called for.

The result will be a renewal of the split, a widening of the breach, and the Democrats again marching to victory! All of which the country will owe to those eminent Republican "leaders" who are even now planning to lead their party for the second time to a disastrous defeat!

A disastrous and certain defeat! For whether Wilson profits, as before, or the electorate—the American people—elect Theodorse Roosevelt on a third party ticket (as we Progressives confidently expect), it will mean "goodby to the G. O. P." forever!

C. M. STANLEY.

Washington, D. C., March 4, 1916.

Money Value of Patriotism.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In The Tribune of the 4th Mr. C. P. Shinn expresses surprise at your stand on the subject of pensions.

I served in 1898 in Porto Rico, and do not feel that our services entitle us to any reward in the shape of pensions.

Mr. Shinn may say that the bill applies to deserving cases only, but one has only to look over the Civil War pension roll to find out what will happen later.

Representatives who are against an adequate army and navy will vote for extravagant pensions with the idea, apparently, of getting votes. They will not give us the means of defending and training ourselves, but prefer to buy our good will afterward.

I am not against pensions to deserving cases, but am against this wholesale reward to those who volunteered. It is too bad that men cannot show their patriotism without putting a money value on it. Few of us deserve this reward, and I hope you will continue your fight against this form of pork barrel. A. R. LIVINGSTON,

Late Captain 1st Volunteer Engineers.

Canon City, Col., March 6, 1916.

Real Help for Unemployed.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Since the problem of unemployment, always chronic and often acute, has for years been the talk of the town and many mighty men have added columns of figures to show how large a number of poor people are getting a raw deal, I feel like asking a question.

After taking considerable time to investigate I have been able to learn of only one movement that aims at a direct and efficient method of aiding the man out of work without forcing him to accept alms. This is the proposal of the Committee on Industrial and Social Service for the Unemployed to establish a permanent workshop with appropriate social features.

Now, in view of the common-sense solution they are offering for a long-troublesome problem, why do we not hear more of their progress?

It seems to me that the newspapers and the public in general should give attention to the matter and back up any movement that aims to substitute action for talk.

J. GREGORY HETFIELD.

New York, March 8, 1916.

ITALY'S POSITION EXPLAINED

She Alone of the Powers Opposed to Germany Realized That the Motto Should Be "Border Defence First"—Balkan Campaign Contemplated at One Time, but Abandoned Because of Distrust of Serbia—If Italy Can Hold the Austrians Where They Are All Will Be Well.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: My Italian interlocutor is not a bootblack, nor is he a prince; but as he claims friendly relations with at least three kings—those of Italy, Serbia and Montenegro—I must not embarrass him by revealing his identity in connection with what he said.

"Italy has been called the only 'slacker' among the Allies," quoth he. "The fact is, she is the wisest and steadiest of them all, and the others would do well to follow her advice and her example. As you have made a slogan of 'Safety First,' so have we of 'Border Defence First.' We were opposed to the Gallipoli expedition, the only object of which was to get to Constantinople before the Russians did, because we deemed it wiser to concentrate all efforts on border defence than to weaken the reserves behind the lines of defence by sending troops on a side expedition. Gallipoli was a failure. The answer to Gallipoli is Verdun."

Rather cryptic, that; but an explanation was forthcoming.

"If Verdun holds out, the German attack there will be the first of a furious series, not only on the Franco-German front, but on the Austro-Italian front as well. The Teutons cannot afford to stay in their trenches any longer; they must now win or be beaten. The very factor which makes time a valuable asset to the Allies, namely, their command of the world's markets, lays them open, now that approaches the end of the second year of a war intended by Germany to last but a few months, to attacks delivered with a violence born of what the Germans call 'Not' [Necessity]. Neither France nor England foresaw that, and Russia is the only one of the Allies who can afford to lose more land than what the enemy already occupies. Italy foresaw it even before she joined the Entente Powers. That is why she opposed the Gallipoli campaign; that is why she possessed herself, in that first grand dash last summer, of those positions in the Alps whence an Austrian invasion of Italy was long planned and would have been possible; that is why she has since devoted all her efforts to fortifying those positions so as to reduce the danger of invasion to a minimum, foregoing the satisfactions of spectacular feats of arms for the more important purpose; that is why Italy, supposedly the most hotheaded of the Allied nations, is in reality the wisest.

"However, at a certain moment Italy did contemplate a Balkan campaign, because for years past she has realized how greatly the interests of the Western Powers were menaced in the Balkans, and because she was the only one who did not undervalue those interests. She it was who first proposed the Allied expedition through Salonica, at a time when it had every chance of success—for reasons of self-interest, if you like, more than for the sake of the Serbians. The Serbians are better off anywhere, under any conditions, than they are in their own country. I know, because I have been in Serbia, on my own behalf and on behalf of my government. Besides, we had our well-founded suspicions that Serbia was playing into the hands of the Teutons, in exchange of promises for the future, when after her initial victory over Austria she withdrew her troops south and westward, instead of making them hold the north with all their might.

"No, not for the sake of Serbia did we propose a Balkan campaign, but for the sake of the Allies' general scheme, which we are accused of leaving out of our accounts. But France and England did not see eye to eye with us then; and later, when they adopted our original plan, we did not see eye to eye with them in the matter, because we knew it was too late. When Bulgaria joined the Teutons we knew that Serbia, attacked from two sides and threatened from a third, could no longer be saved, because there was no time for adequate preparation. Clemenceau was the only statesman in France or England who indorsed the views of Italy. I need not point out who was the wiser, Paris and London or Rome.

"Why did we not at least save poor little Montenegro? Poor little Montenegro was sold to the Teutons. This is not fancy, but a fact I can personally vouch for. The very Minister who, the other day, issued such a flamboyant declaration of Montenegrin loyalty to the Allies said to me eleven years ago, when I was in Montenegro on a government mission: 'What we need is money. If Italy won't give us money, we know well enough where to go for it!'

"Even if we had not known Montenegro to be sold to Austria, what could we have done for her at the late hour when the enemy surrounded her from all sides? Our staff calculated that our aid, in order to be of any use at all, would have to amount to 800,000 men and nearly half the artillery pieces now protecting our Alpine positions. We could hardly spare so many troops and guns. But had we sent them across the Adriatic what would have happened? The men would have been slaughtered or driven into the sea before they could set up their guns.

"One can't very well picture the conditions in Montenegro if one hasn't seen them. There are, one may say, no roads, no bridges, scarcely any houses. Cettinje is a village of 4,000 souls. At the coronation festivities, in 1910, at which I was present, there were about fifteen hundred foreign visitors in the capital. Where were they put up? All but a few had to lodge in tents. Where would Montenegro have housed our army of 300,000? Tents are not sufficient protection in the mountains during the raw winter season. In the Alps we have built village after village of stone and wood houses, well heated with stoves and well supplied with adequate food, for our defenders, of whom not one is now reduced to a frail canvas shelter. But villages do not rise by magic out of the rock, and nothing short of magic could have quickly enough provided even the roughest sort of abode for our army in Montenegro.

"Then the guns. In 1905 Italy presented Montenegro with a lot of her old discarded guns, of all calibre, to be set up on the mountains, where they could still be useful enough for purposes of defence. I saw the roads and bridges after the guns had passed. The roads were ditches, and not one bridge was there left that had not crumbled under the weight of the artillery pieces. To think of transporting modern cannon in Montenegro without first building ways for them to pass over would be the height of folly. And solid roads and bridges can no more be built over night than villages. If Italy had sent 300,000 men, with nothing but portable tents for shelter, to face the big Skodas with rifles and bayonets for sole defence, she would have made herself guilty of the wholesale murder of her own sons.

"Any one who has the least idea of conditions east of the Adriatic must realize that Serbia and Montenegro were doomed when France and England refused to see the urgency of a Balkan expedition immediately after the first Serbian victories. Nothing the Allies were able to do later, no amount of good will on their part, could stem the avalanche.

"As far as Italy is concerned, she has upon the Teutonic invasion of the Balkans with equanimity. If the Central Powers are victorious in the end, they will deal with the Balkans in approved Teutonic fashion anyway, whether they occupy the land or not. If they are beaten on their western, eastern and Italian fronts they will have to withdraw from every inch of territory the Allies do not want them to retain. Meanwhile, by the very fact of their victories and invasions, they are sapping their own strength, harming themselves much more than they harm the Allies. France and Britain can with combined efforts prevent the Germans from breaking through the western front; if Italy can hold the Austrians where they are in the Alps, which I am confident she will, without any costly offensive on our part, the Central Powers will all but beaten. Then we will deal the final blow in the Balkans: Russia from Galicia and the Black Sea, perhaps even through Turkey, who is already crying for mercy, France and England from their ever-strengthening base at Salonica; and Italy from Albania. At present we have at Avlona a force of 250,000 men, including a great number of naturalized Albanians among officers and privates, who speak the language of the country and are now training native troops who are to join us. There cannot be a doubt that such a concerted thrust will restore Serbia to the Serbians.

"As for Montenegro, I think all the Allies agree that she must lose her sovereignty and become a province of the new Serbia.

"To show you how jealous we Italians are of Serbia as a rival power on the Adriatic, let me point to the map: We are not unwilling, but indeed anxious, that the proposed Slav kingdom should have the Croatian coast from below Fiume to above Zara, including the port of Zengg, which lends itself to considerable development. The Dalmatian coast from Zara to the River Narenta, being essentially Italian, we claim for ourselves. The rest of Dalmatia, down to Cattaro and including the city of Ragusa, and its splendid harbor of Gravosa, we leave to Serbia. We would even let her have Scutari, in Albania, with the port of San Giovanni di Medua. One self-governing Albania we wish to establish, an Italian protectorate, in order to avoid future strife, which a division of the land would certainly foster, keeping only Avlona in complete possession as a sort of Gibraltar. For, though we desire the utmost prosperity of the new Serbian kingdom, we shall never countenance its becoming a naval power on the Adriatic. Our experience with Austria has taught us that the Adriatic must be to Italy what the Black Sea is to Russia; nothing short of that can satisfy us.

"When the war is ended and the Allies victorious, as they must be, Italy's aspirations will become realities—the bond will be signed by all the Allies before she fires the first shot—and then the world will give us credit for the wisdom with which she conducted her part of the struggle."

All very well. But if the best laid plans of Italy should gang agley, we are likely to hear some one quote Pascal:

"Le nez de Cléopatre, s'il eut été plus long, la face du monde eut été changée."

New York, March 8, 1916. F. C. FAY.

A LESSON FROM SWITZERLAND

Preparedness There Saved the Nation from Being Overrun in the German Attack on France—Weaker Belgium Had to Take the Blow—Let America Ponder.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The argument that preparedness and universal service tend to breed militarism was brought up in some of the speeches made for the National Security League last Wednesday night. With so much existing proof to the contrary, this argument would be negligible were it not that this feeling seems to exist to an extraordinary degree in this country.

The Swiss system of universal service is held up as a model, but preparation and universal service in connection with the Swiss situation to-day have not been used to point a moral.

Switzerland, through propinquity and intermarriage, should have the hyphen problem to the nth power. To the west they have France, to the south Italy, to the east Austria-Hungary and to the north Germany. Taking the train at Geneva, where all signs are in French and where the French language predominates, as you journey the three or four hours north to Basle the signs and language begin to change from French to German, and the thought that occurs to an American is, "How more than extraordinary it is that Switzerland has maintained her neutrality and has not become involved in the war."

At Basle there is a salient of Swiss land that extends out between the French and German frontiers. This salient is occupied by Swiss troops, and on either side are encamped the French and Germans, a constant source of irritation and temptation to one another, but not a shot crosses that salient, though the shock of the big guns is plainly felt. The Swiss have made no attempt to threaten either country as to what would happen if they violated their neutrality, but last spring, when seven aeroplanes crossed the Swiss border while battling in the air, they were immediately fired upon, and a little later when at Lake Constance one of the Zeppelins drifted across the line the same thing occurred. I am told the bullets were aimed to try to bring these aeroplanes down the moment they crossed the border line. Can any one doubt that the reason this is possible is because the army was mobilized; that there was an army to mobilize, and finally that the people were Swiss, not Swiss-Germans nor Swiss-French?

The story told me last summer by a staff colonel of the Swiss army, as we sat outside his villa, near Basle, with the windows rattling from the vibration of the big guns, was that when the war clouds were seen to be gathering, about a year before the war, the Swiss invited the Kaiser to their autumn manœuvres and showed him their army corps, equipped, armed and trained, and let him weigh in the balance that half-million men, thoroughly prepared, against the advantages to be gained by the use of that Rhine Valley highway. It was that object lesson, that display of strength, the Swiss firmly believe, that turned the scale. It is believed by the Swiss that the General Staff of the German army compared Switzerland, with its active army of 142,000 men, its reserve of nearly 400,000 men, making a total of 540,000, with a population of 3,750,000, to Belgium, with its standing army of 58,000 men, its reserve of about 300,000, or a total of 360,000, with a population of 7,500,000, and decided the less difficult highway to conquer was Belgium. While the Swiss to-day are in a position of having to borrow a good deal of money, because it costs a great deal of money, time and self-sacrifice to maintain 500,000 men on a war footing for more than a year and a half, still no one can doubt that they are glad to make that sacrifice and are to a man thanking their stars that they did not have to take the place of Belgium.

Admitting these facts, this lesson would make converts of all our countrymen. It bears out in every respect the propaganda of preparedness and universal service. The absolute unity of the nation, the stern resolve to defend their borders against aggression at no matter what cost, its neutrality against every temptation, is as great and noble in its way as the bravery and courage of the attacked nations is in theirs.

We grant that this kind of preparation means heavy yearly expenditures, but, after all, this expenditure is for insurance, and the money comes out of one pocket and goes into the other, and both pockets are in our own country, for, after all, preparation will mean money spent here and will go into general circulation. The war has brought a tide of money to our shores, which had better be employed in preparing us, so that we may keep it here, than to lie idle, a temptation to those from whose pockets it came.

With the example we have before us in Switzerland it seems hard to believe that we are not going to learn from their experience that preparation and national service, far from spelling militarism, make for patriotism, unity of interests and thoughts. It has made of a country beset (both internally and externally) by every temptation to violate neutrality a country unshakable in its resolve to defend itself against the slightest aggression, but not "by word or deed" to become involved in war. THOMAS C. CLARKE.

New York, March 3, 1916.

Christian Science and the Senses.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The letter of Adam M. Wilson in your issue of March 6 indicates that there are still two people—Mr. Wilson and the policeman to whom he facetiously refers—who even at this late date believe that Christian Science is stoicism, a fool's paradise, blind optimism or some other form of tomfoolery. But Mr. Wilson and his "finest" friend should know that Christian Science is just exactly what its name implies—namely, the science of right or exact thinking.

"Science reverses the false testimony of the physical senses," writes Mrs. Eddy on page 120 of "Science and Health," "and by this reversal mortals arrive at the fundamental facts of being." In other words, the very evil conditions which others believe to be real and impossible for them to escape from Christian Science can overcome proportionately to their understanding of the omnipotence and omnipresence of good. Referring to God's ability to supply our temporary needs, Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

A policeman may find some satisfaction in standing by a flameless, cast-off gas heater in zero weather in the belief that he is practising Christian Science, but the Christian Scientist, like other normal people, would, if he needed it and his duties would permit, go where there was some heat. If his duties would not permit this, he could depend with confidence upon the comfort being supplied in some other practical way.

ROBERT S. ROSS.

New York, March 8, 1916.

SEAPLANES AS VESSELS.

Are They Primarily Air or Water Craft?

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: To-day's newspapers are worried about the alleged classification of the hydroaeroplane (and presumably the flying boat also) as a "vessel" and the alleged possibility of aircraft manufacturers moving to Canada, the latter theory being quoted from that of "Henry Woodhouse (née Casalegno), editor of 'Flying' and governor of the Aero Club of America." Attention is called to the fact that this definition of a seaplane as a "vessel" contradicts Secretary Bryan's claim that a seaplane is primarily an aeroplane, and does not come under Article 1 of the thirteenth convention of the second Hague Conference, in answer to Bernstorff's attempt to claim a hydro-aeroplane is a vessel.

It does not seem possible that Secretary Bryan, Bernstorff and the esteemed editor could have overlooked such an important item as the fact that hydro-aeroplanes have been "vessels" in one sense since the summer of 1912, when the Department of Commerce announced (Aeronautics, p. 19, July, 1913) it considered hydro-aeroplanes and flying boats as "vessels" while they operated on the water and would require them to comply with the rules of the department as to lights, rules of the road, etc., under penalty of fine, and the act to be enforced by collectors of customs and other officers.

Albert Lee Thurman, solicitor for the department, rendered an official opinion which places hydro-aeroplanes and flying boats under control of the Federal government through the steamboat inspection service, Bureau of Navigation. "Tony" Jannus was the first aviator to apply for a license under the new ruling, when he operated a flying boat ferry between Tampa and St. Petersburg, Fla., the winter of 1913-'14. (Aeronautics, p. 73, March 15, 1914.) (Aeronautics, p. 8, February 28, 1914.)

A. C. Beech also obtained a license (Aeronautics, p. 122, October 30, 1914), and the Jannus license was reproduced in this issue. In 1915 E. K. Jaquith, operating a flying boat passenger-carrying business and school at Atlantic City, was required to obtain a license and conform with regulations as to fire extinguishers, life preservers, etc.

As this classification is not new, but three years old, it is obvious that Bernstorff would have made use of it had it been applicable. Secretary Bryan took the view that, despite the fact that the hydro-aeroplane and flying boat were motor boats when operating on the waters of the United States, the machine was primarily an aeroplane, and therefore a legitimate article of commerce, available for sale to belligerent nations by citizens of a neutral country.

It is obvious that a Federal law for the registration of aircraft and licensing of operators is desirable, to avoid the problem of forty-eight different state laws to the same end, which now exist with relation to automobiles. Automobilists have fought for years for a Federal law, without success. The start has now been made as far as the flying machines are concerned by the recent act of the Department of Commerce. The Aero Club of Pennsylvania a year or so ago introduced a bill for the Federal registration of aircraft and licensing of operators, but for some reason it has not been pressed. Several states have already passed laws with respect to registration and licensing, and it is hoped by those who have the future of aeronautics at heart that it will be possible to have a national uniform law.

ERNEST L. JONES,
Editor of Aeronautics.

New York, Feb. 23, 1916.